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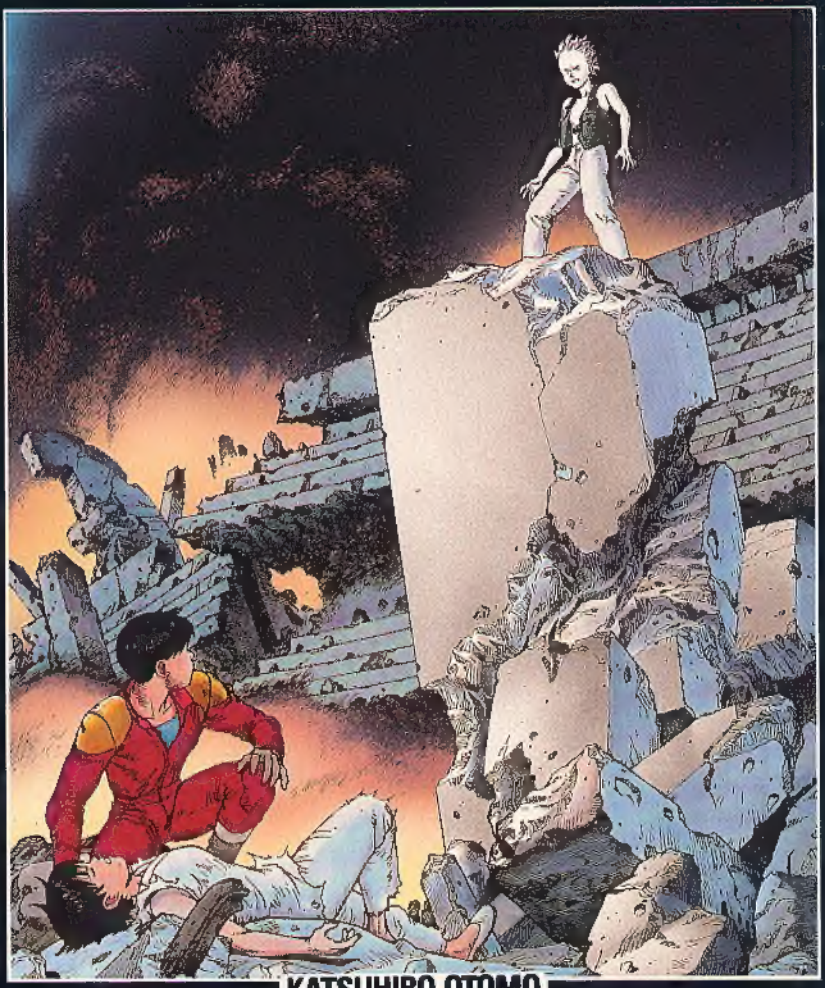

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

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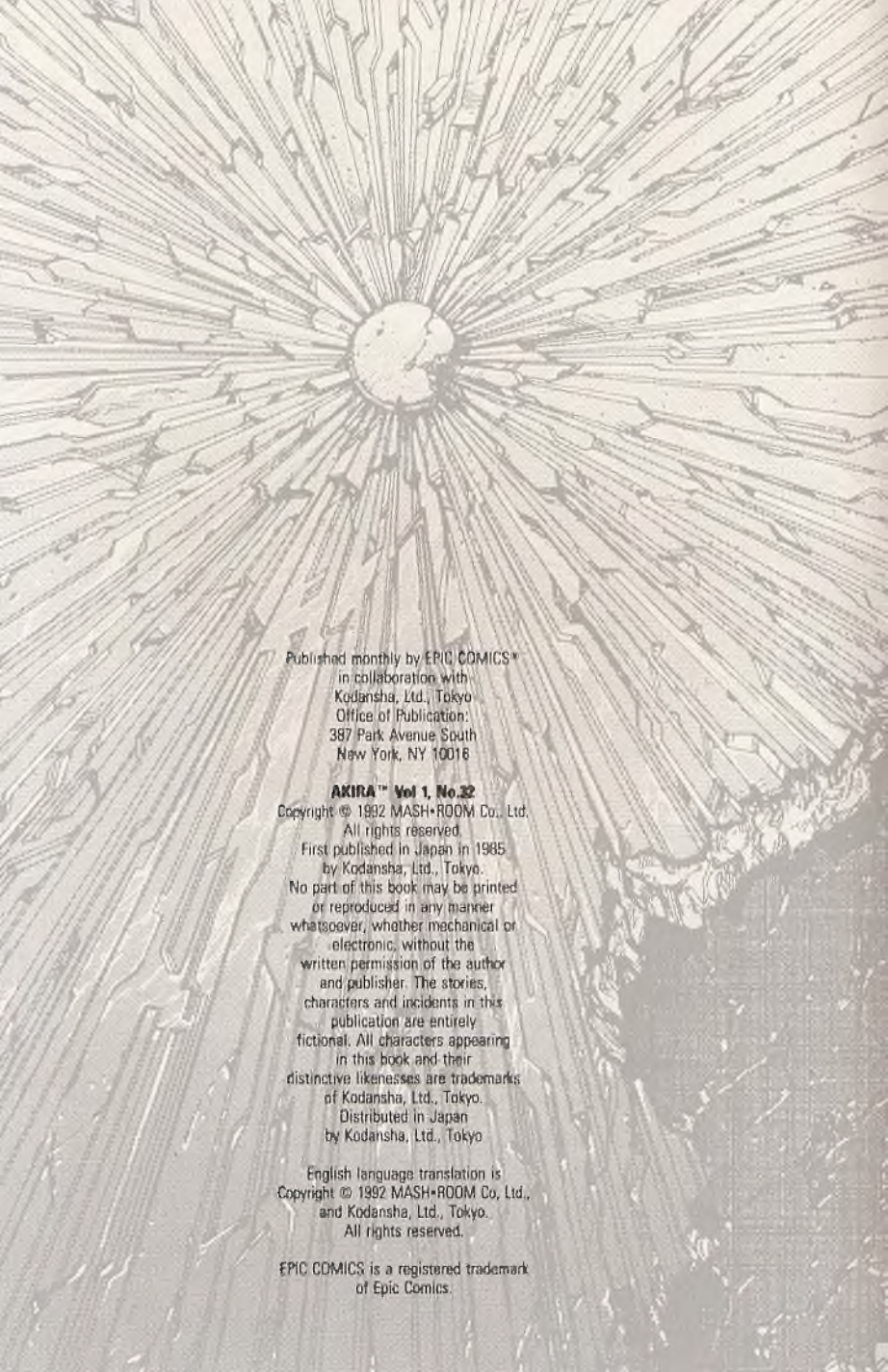

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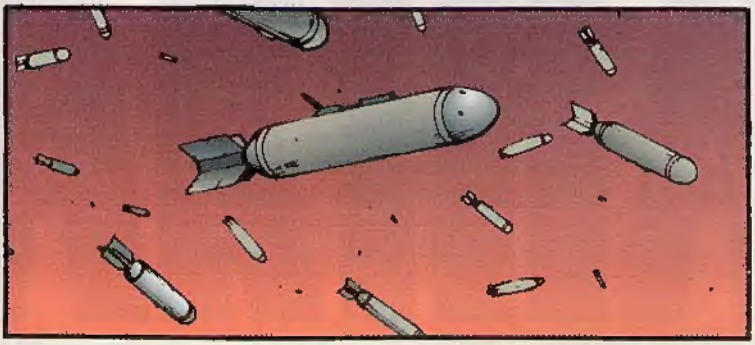


AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 32

CLASS REUNION

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

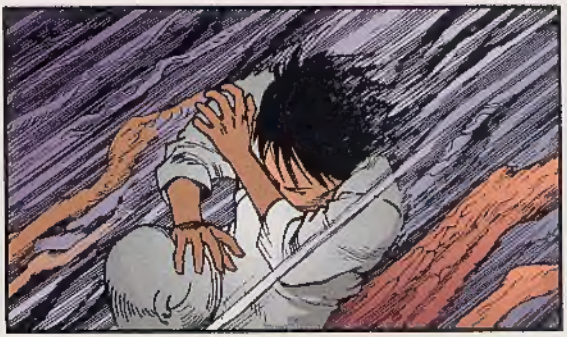
2030. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. **Kaneda,** one-time leader of a delinquent gang, is caught up in the aftermath of a power struggle between a Japanese military research organization — led by a man known only as the **Colonel** — and a resistance group whose members include **Kay, Ryu,** and **Chiyoko.**

The **Colonel** had a number of psychic children under his control. Each is identified by a number marked on the hand. Among them were **Kiyoko** and **Masaru — Numbers 25** and **27.** The blind **Lady Miyako — Number 19 —** was once among their ranks but now heads a great religious cult. **Number 41** is **Tetsuo,** once Kaneda's friend, but now his greatest enemy. **Tetsuo** lost his left arm to a laser blast from the Colonel's military satellite **SOL,** and has used cybernetics and telekinesis to fabricate for himself a prosthetic replacement.

Most powerful of all the children is **Number 26 — Akira** — a docile and enigmatic boy who was placed in a cryogenic sleep almost forty years ago after he started the Third World War with a mental blast. He was recently reawakened by the jealous and ambitious **Tetsuo.** Shortly thereafter he responded to an emotional trauma by again devastating the reconstructed city of **Neo-Tokyo.** Now Japan exists in a state of emergency. The forces of the army and the resistance scattered, and the military's formidable "caretaker robots" patrol the streets.

In the western part of

Kaneda Kiyoko Akira Kay



Neo-Tokyo the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed — a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. Together the pair use their powers, healing the sick, wielding control of the faithful, and organizing their subjects. Most faithful among their numerous followers are Tetsuo's dapper, ambitious assistant assistant and his friend **Kaori.** Their headquarters is Neo-Tokyo's **Olympic Stadium.** To the east, **Lady Miyako** welcomes refugees, including **Kay** and **Chiyoko,** to her shrine. In this, she is aided by **Kiyoko, Masaru,** and a number of loyal and psychically gift monks.

The **Empire** is infiltrated by teams of spies from the outside world, but all of them except **Lieutenant Yamada** — who takes temporary shelter with **Ryu** — are killed. **Ryu** wants to join with **Yamada** until he learns that the spy plans to assasinate **Akira** even if it means taking innocent lives. After that, **Ryu** keeps an eye on **Yamada,** trying to protect both the invader and the people of **Neo-Tokyo.**

Aboard an American naval vessel, an international group of scientists studying the **Akira** phenomenon learns that the world's armies have amassed an **Akira Assassination Corps,** despite their recommendations. They are aghast to learn that, to stop **Akira**, the military is willing to destroy all of **Neo-Tokyo** and its citizens, if necessary. One of the scientists — **Stanley Simmons** — goes ashore without authorization,

Kaori The Colonel Ryu Stanley Simmons

hoping desperately to implement a secret plan.

Meanwhile, **Lady Miyako, Masaru,** and **Kiyoko** convince **Kay** to join them in battle against **Tetsuo,** because **Kay** is a powerful medium through whom the others could project their powers and strike as one. **Lady Miyako** explains that Akira's personality has been destroyed by his power, leaving him a passive vessel, and that when Tetsuo's character is likewise eroded, he too will be beyond control. Remembering that, on a whim, **Tetsuo** recently destroyed part of the moon and set off geological cataclysms, **Kay** agrees to join them.

Kaneda, who's teamed up with **Kai** and **Joker** — a friend and a rival from his gang days — is outraged to learn of the risk that **Miyako** has talked **Kay** into taking. He vows to kill **Tetsuo** himself rather than let **Kay** face such danger. He, **Kai** and **Joker** formulate a strategy involving most of their men as well as the state-of-the-art weapons they've salvaged, including laser rifles, flying platforms, and one caretaker robot. Together, they head for the **Olympic Stadium.**

Following his huge expenditure of power, **Tetsuo** begins to lose control, and his artificial arm assumes a grossly mutated form. He runs amok, killing anyone who comes too close. His power has grown beyond what his body can contain and is now trying to absorb

Tetsuo

Masaru

Lady Miyako

Lt. Yamada

its surroundings.

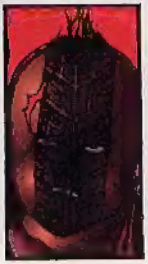
Yamada and his men meet one of Tetsuo's trained psychics — the **Eggplant Man.** To their dismay, they find that he can withstand gunfire. . .and kill without touching. However, they are able to distract him long enough to kill him, and then eliminate Tetsuo's other trained psychics with biochemical weapons, saving their deadliest germs for use against **Tetsuo.**

Soon after, the **Colonel** also reaches the stadium, determined to kill **Tetsuo,** who he believes could become another **Akira.** He manages to fire one blast from **SOL** before outside military forces seize control of the satellite by computer. Then, **Joker** arrives on a flying platform and strikes **Tetsuo,** causing him to mutate again.

Kaori, still loyally trying to find someone to help the boy she loves, learn that Tetsuo's former assistant is now planning to betray and murder his former master. As she runs to warn **Tetsuo,** the traitor shoots her in the back. **Tetsuo,** his mutations temporarily in remission, comes upon her as she dies.

Chiyoko

Tetsuo's Aide



Joker

Kai

HURRY!
HUH?!
MA--
--MASTER TETSUO!
...SIR!...

:GUUHYK-*:
WHU
THE AMERICAN ARMY IS RIGHT BEHIND US!
WE NEED YOUR POWER!
:YAAGH!:

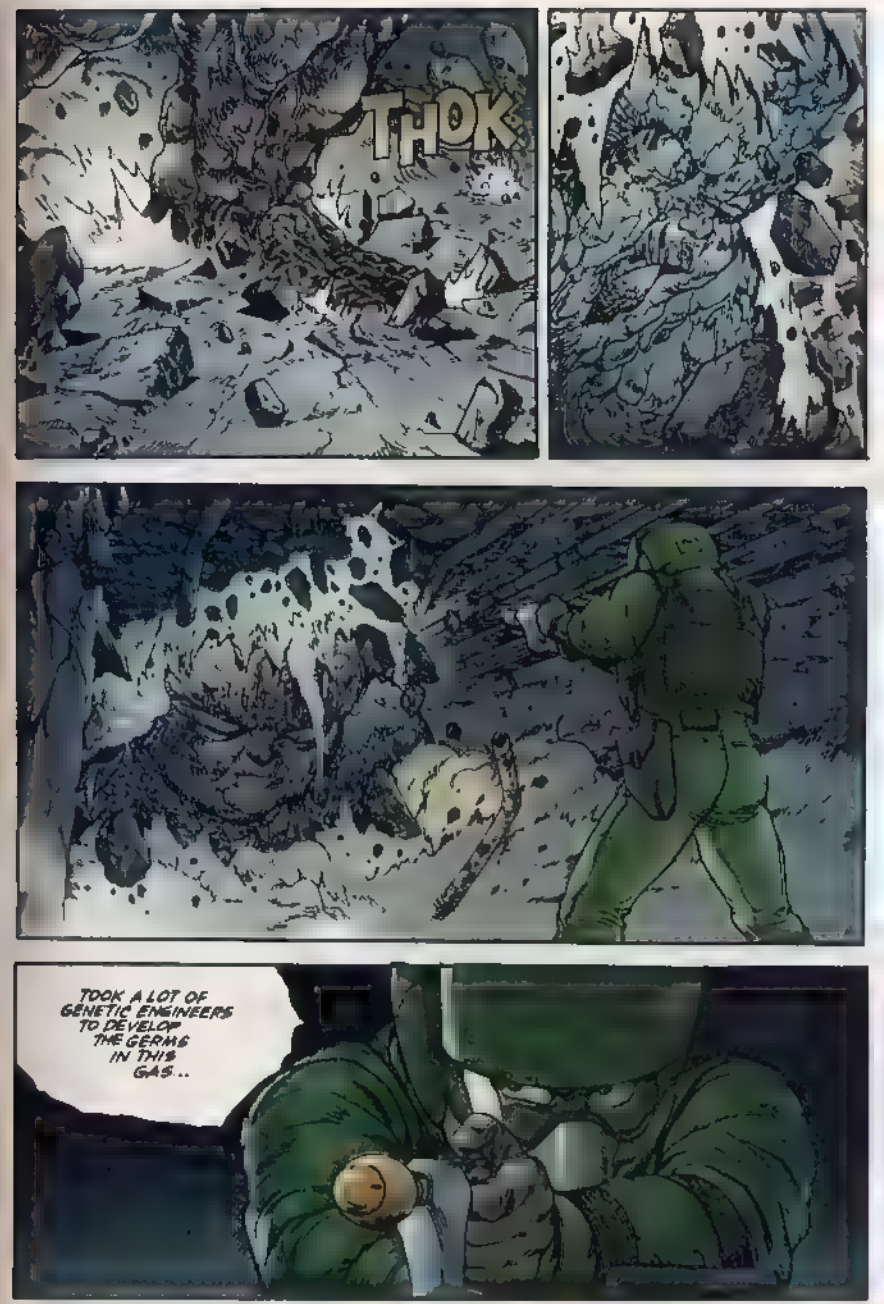
...AA...AAH...
POM
!
SHUF
SHOOT THEM, DAMN IT!
BLAM
BUDDA BUDDA
plik plik
UH-OH!
AAUU...

WHAT THE HELL--?!
AAAHHH..
OOUUUHHH!
HOLY SHIT!

RRUMMM
THOK
SLUK
AUGH!

RUN!!
RRUM
FWUP
WE'LL USE PIC-24 AS SOON AS EVERYONE'S INTO HIS GEAR!
KRASH
HUNH?!
THEY CAN ALL DIE TOGETHER!

KRAK
WHOK
...OOH
BAM
SHUK


THOK
TOOK A LOT OF GENETIC ENGINEERS TO DEVELOP THE GERMS IN THIS GAS..

POM
GO GET 'IM!
FOOM
THUP
FUSSH
GYYAAAH!

SIR!!
RNK
HUNH?
!
!
¡GUGHK!¿

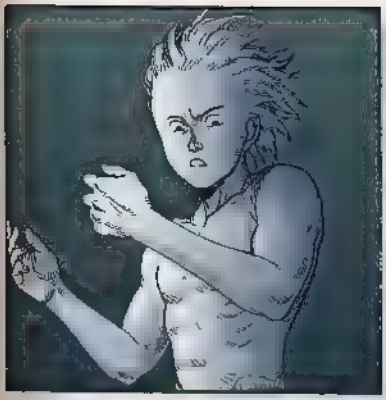
GLAHG
BLORK
...K..
...RA..
.A.

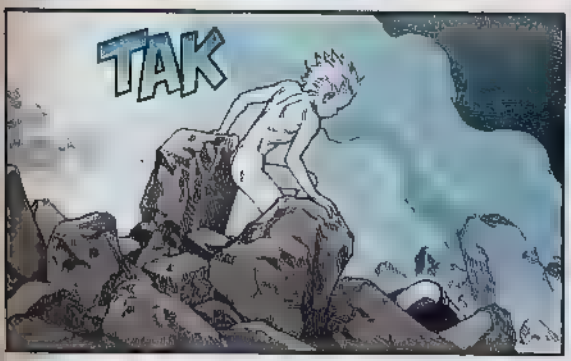
shuuuuft
shuuuu
HMM?
WHAT THE HELL--?!

IS HE SUCKING TALL IN.. ?
HA! HA! HA!
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...
THE GAS ISN'T WORKING_

AHA!
IT'S LIKE A MIRACLE!
AT LAST--
--NUMBER 43--
--IS FEELING WELL!

APPARENTLY SOMEONE HAS ADMINISTERED TO HIM SOME FORM OF DRUG!
A DRUG...?
DAMN!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
THE PAIN IS GONE LIKE IT WAS JUST A DREAM

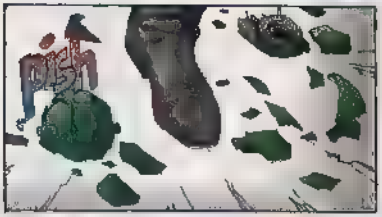



TAK

KAOR ...

POK
OW!

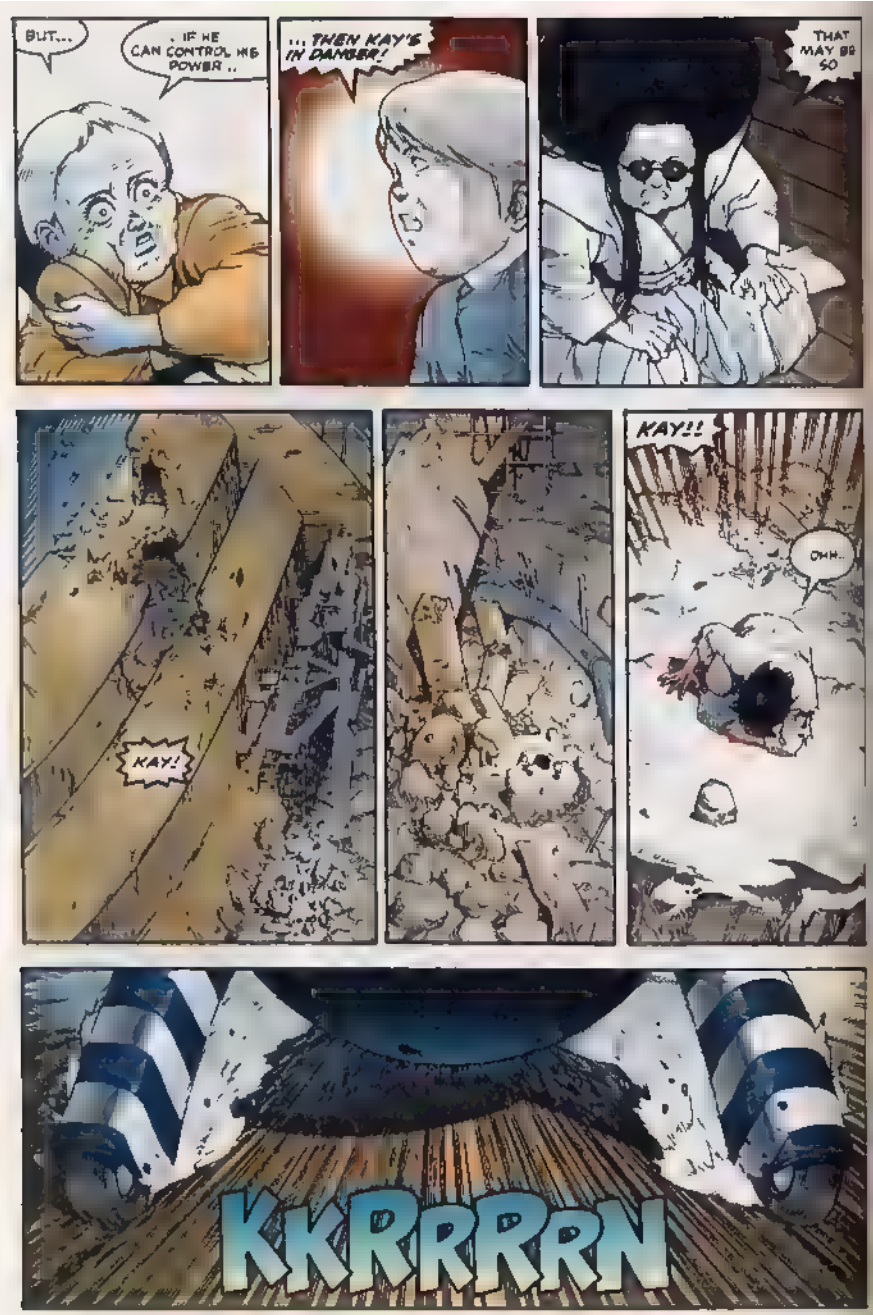
KRUNK



AARHN!

AAH--

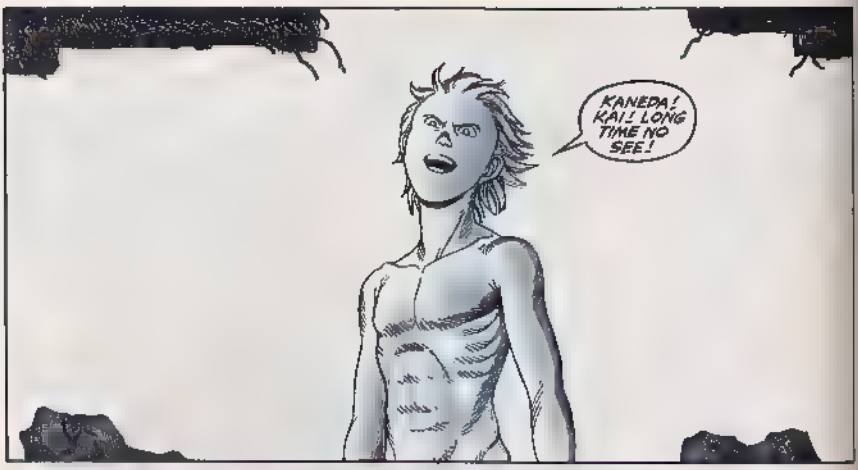
BOOM


BUT...
. IF HE CAN CONTROL HIS POWER ..
... THEN KAY'S IN DANGER!
THAT MAY BE SO
KAY!
KAY!!
OHH..
KKRRRRN

HUH?
KRRRRRN
RRRRN

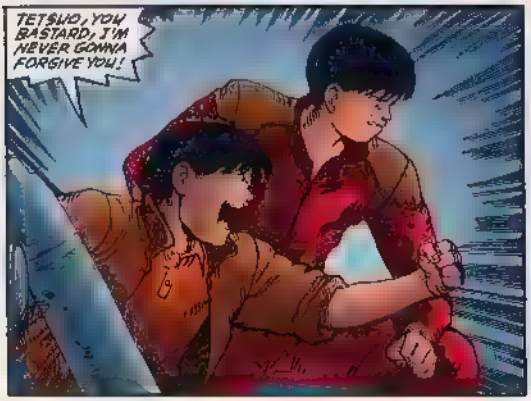
RRRRRRN
KRRRRRN
!
TETSUO!!
KA NE... DA ?
HUNH?
KANEDA, STOP!!

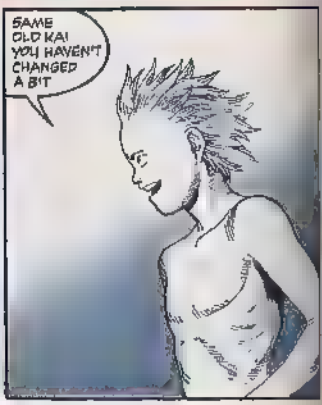
SKREEEEEEEEE
THAT KID...
...ISN'T HE AKIRA?!
YOU MEAN "LORD AKIRA"?!


KANEDA! KAI! LONG TIME NO SEE!

BUT THERE'S ONLY TWO OF YOU! WHERE'S THE REST OF THE GANG?

IT'S BEEN A LONG WHILE, ALL RIGHT. I NEVER EXPECTED YOU TO L VE TH;S LONG


TETSUO, YOU BASTARD, I'M NEVER GONNA FORGIVE YOU!

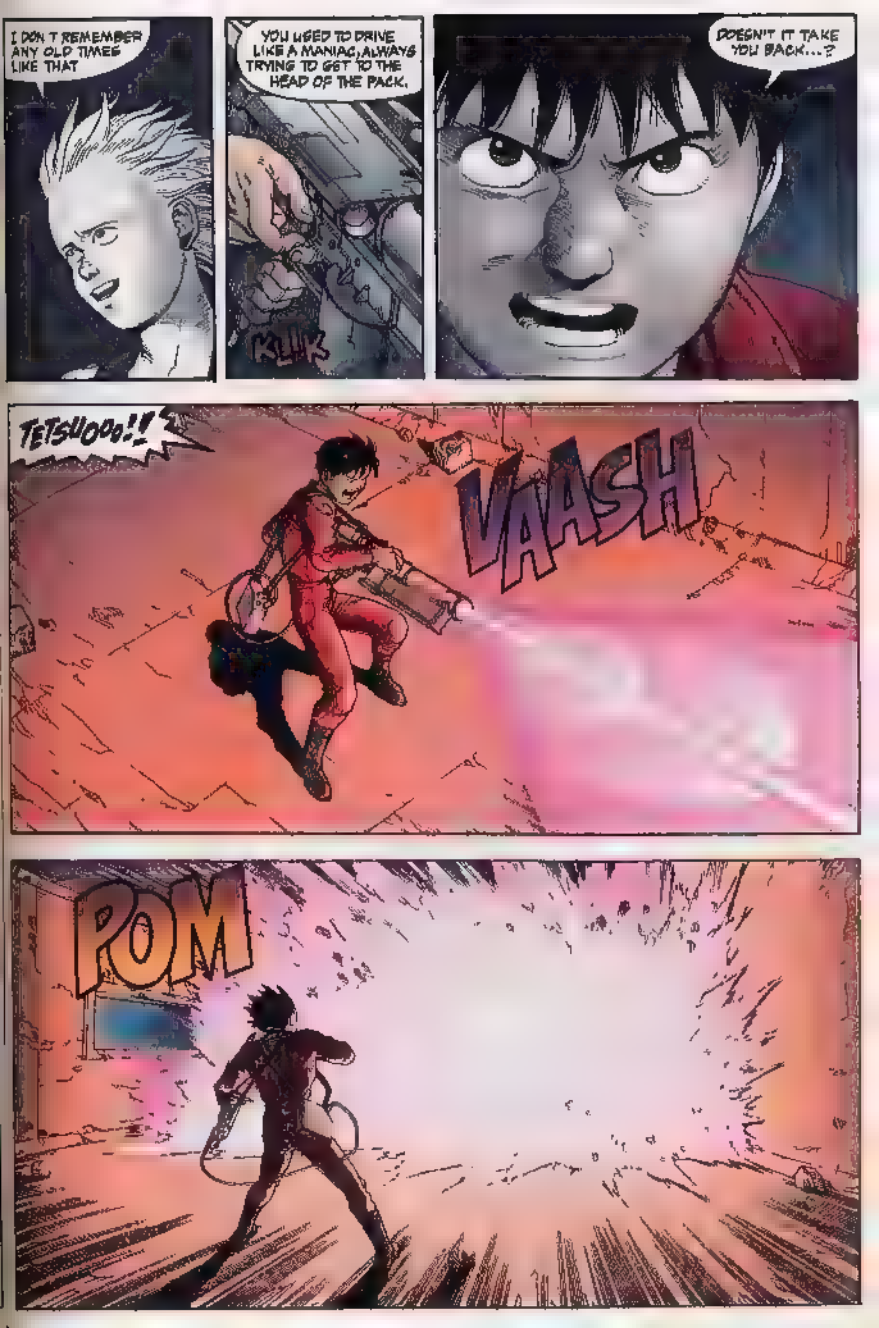

SAME OLD KAI YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT

I HEARD YOU'D BECOME A REAL BIG SHOT, RUNNING THE WHOLE SHOW.
FINALLY GOT WHAT YOU WANTED, HUNH?
KAI TAKE AKIRA AND GO FIND JOKER
DON'T BE STUPID. I CAN'T LEAVE YOU HERE ALONE WHEN YOU TAKE HIM DOWN, I WANT TO BE RIGHT BESIDE YOU
RIGHT!
EVERYONE SHOULD BE IN AT THE END. SO GO GET 'EM.
BUT--
WHAT ARE YOU TWO ARGUING ABOUT..?
TAK
CAUTION
TOK
GET AKIRA TO A SAFE PLACE

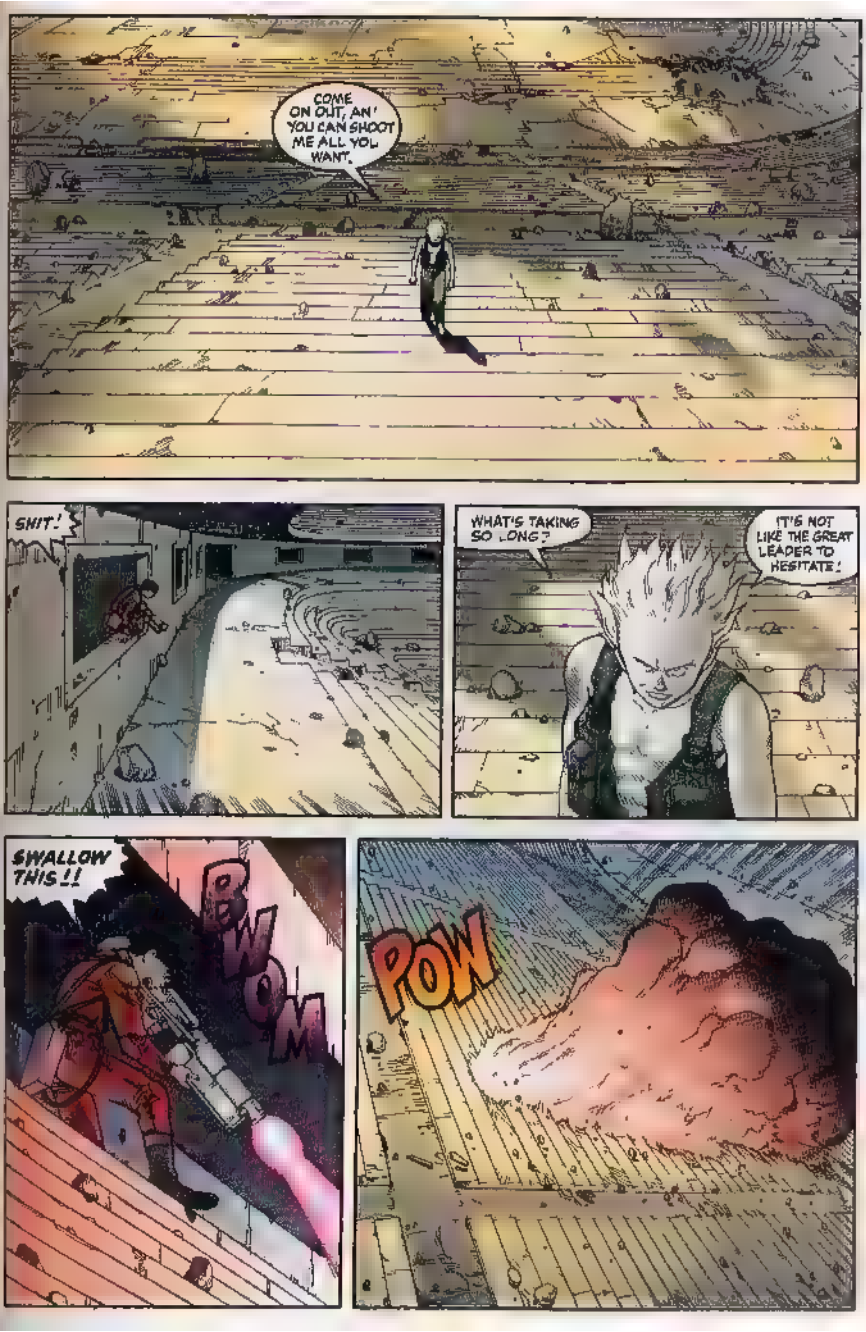
AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T UPSET HIM. OTHERWISE HE COULD DESTROY THE WHOLE WORLD.
GODDAMN!
TOM TOM TOM
WAIT FOR ME I SWEAR I'LL BRING 'EM ALL BACK.

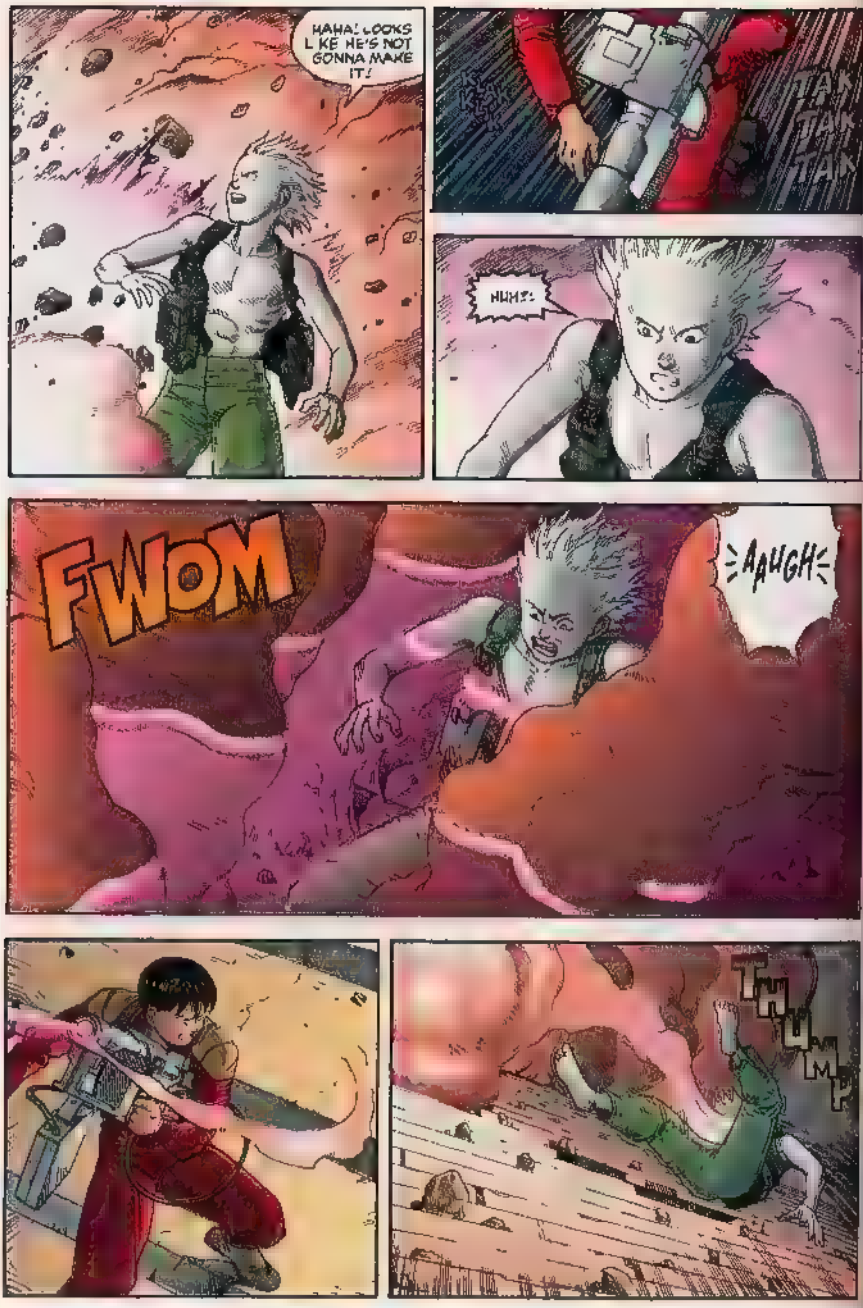
DON'T COUNT ON HIM LASTING THAT LONG.
I CAN TRY
I HAVEN'T HEARD THAT ARROGANT MOUTH OF YOURS FOR A LONG TIME
AND YOU'RE NEVER GONNA HEAR IT AGAIN.
YAMAGATA AND THE OTHERS
. ARE LINED UP AT THE GATES OF HELL WAITING FOR YOU

VEEEEEN
FATCH
HMMM, EFFECTIVE.
JUST ...KE THE OLD TIMES, HUNK? WHEN WE RODE MOTORCYCLES WITH THE REST OF THE GANG?


I DON'T REMEMBER ANY OLD TIMES LIKE THAT
YOU USED TO DRIVE LIKE A MANIAC, ALWAYS TRYING TO GET TO THE HEAD OF THE PACK.
DOESN'T IT TAKE YOU BACK...?
TETSUOOo!!
VAASH
POM

HUHH?
TAP
WHERE'D HE GO?!
!
OUTSIDE...?
YO! KANEDA! I'M OUT HERE!


COME ON OUT, AN' YOU CAN SHOOT ME ALL YOU WANT.
SHIT!
WHAT'S TAKING SO LONG?
IT'S NOT LIKE THE GREAT LEADER TO HESITATE!
SWALLOW THIS!!
BWOM
POW


HAHA! LOOKS LIKE HE'S NOT GONNA MAKE IT!
TAK TAK TAK
HUH?!
FWOM
AAUGH
THUMP

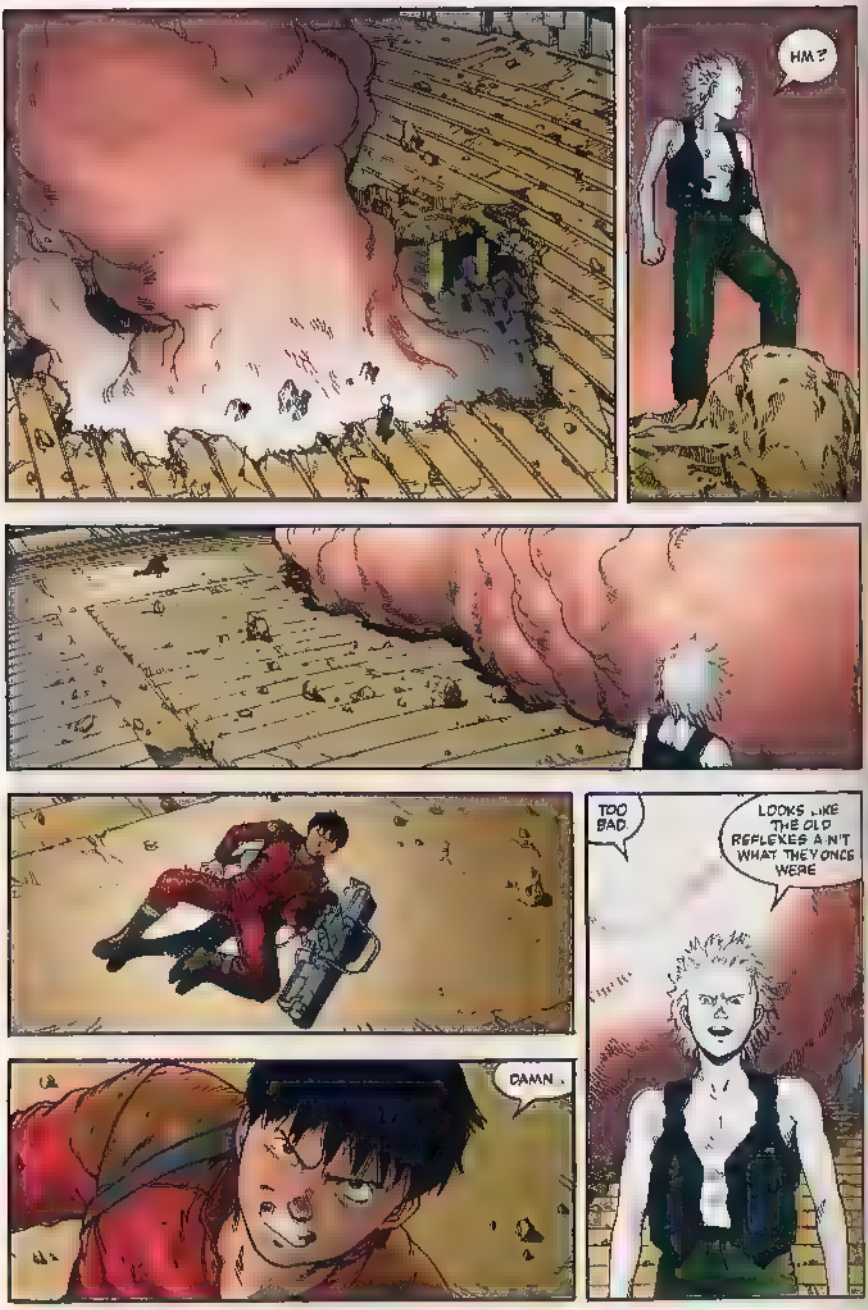
GOTCHA!
AAH..!
MOVE IT!
FWOM
CRAP!
HW OMM

SSSSHHM
TOM
TOM
TOM
JOKER! HEY, JOKER!
THIS IS KAI!
DO YOU READ ME?
JOKER!
WHERE ARE YOU? IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, ANSWER ME!
JOKER?
BEEP
KRACKLE
FZZT
FZZZZZT
POP
DO YOU READ ME?
! ! !!
COME IN.. OVER!
KRACKLE FZZT
JOKER.
COME ON, YA BIG PIG.
BIP BZZT

HEY PIGGY WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER?
KLIK
WHY YOU CALL N' "PIGGY", YOU PEST?! I'M TRYIN' T'FIX...
I'M FIXIN' THIS STUPID MACHINE!
THOP
DRRRN
VVVVN
HMM?
DRRRRN
RRRN
AAH-!

KAI!
SKREEE
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHERS?
THEY'RE SHOOTING IT OUT WITH THE LAST GUYS FROM THE EMPIRE, BUT I DON'T THINK THEY'RE GONNA MAKE IT, AND JOKER'S--!
CALL 'EM TOGETHER. WE'RE ALL GONNA ATTACK AT ONCE.
BUT...THEY'RE STILL...
WE FOUND TETSUO!
NO SHIT!
WHERE?!
TAK
KANEDA'S TRYING TO STALL HIM BUT HE CAN'T HOLD HIM OFF FOR LONG.

THAT'S WHY YOU HAVE TO LEND ME YOUR BIKE.
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
THAT'S AKIRA RIDING IN THE MACHINE. GET HIM TO SAFETY.
NO SHIT?
THE REAL AKIRA?
THIS IS GONNA BE THE BIG ONE!
DRRRRN
BE SURE AN' TELL JOKER!
DRRRRN
DRRRRN
WAIT--! I WAS LOOKING FOR JOKER!


HM?
TOO BAD.
LOOKS LIKE THE OLD REFLEXES AIN'T WHAT THEY ONCE WERE
DAMN.

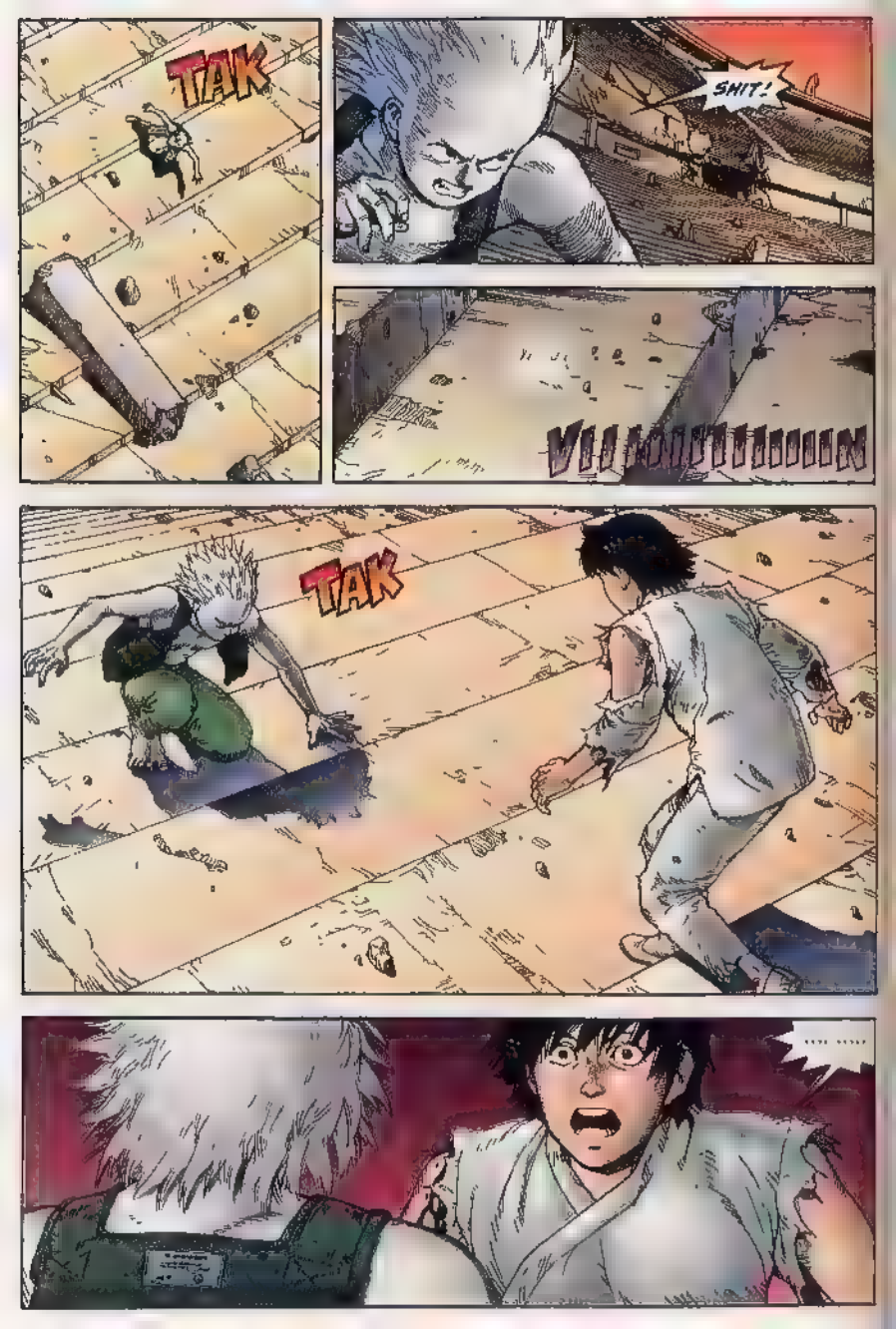
SHHH
NICE AND STEADY... AIM...
THAT'S THE TICKET!
NOT READY TO DIE YET, ARE YOU?
!
WHAT?!

YOU'RE...
KAY!

YOU LOOK LIKE SOMETHING THE CAT DRAGGED IN... DEAD ON YOUR FEET...
!
HUHN?!

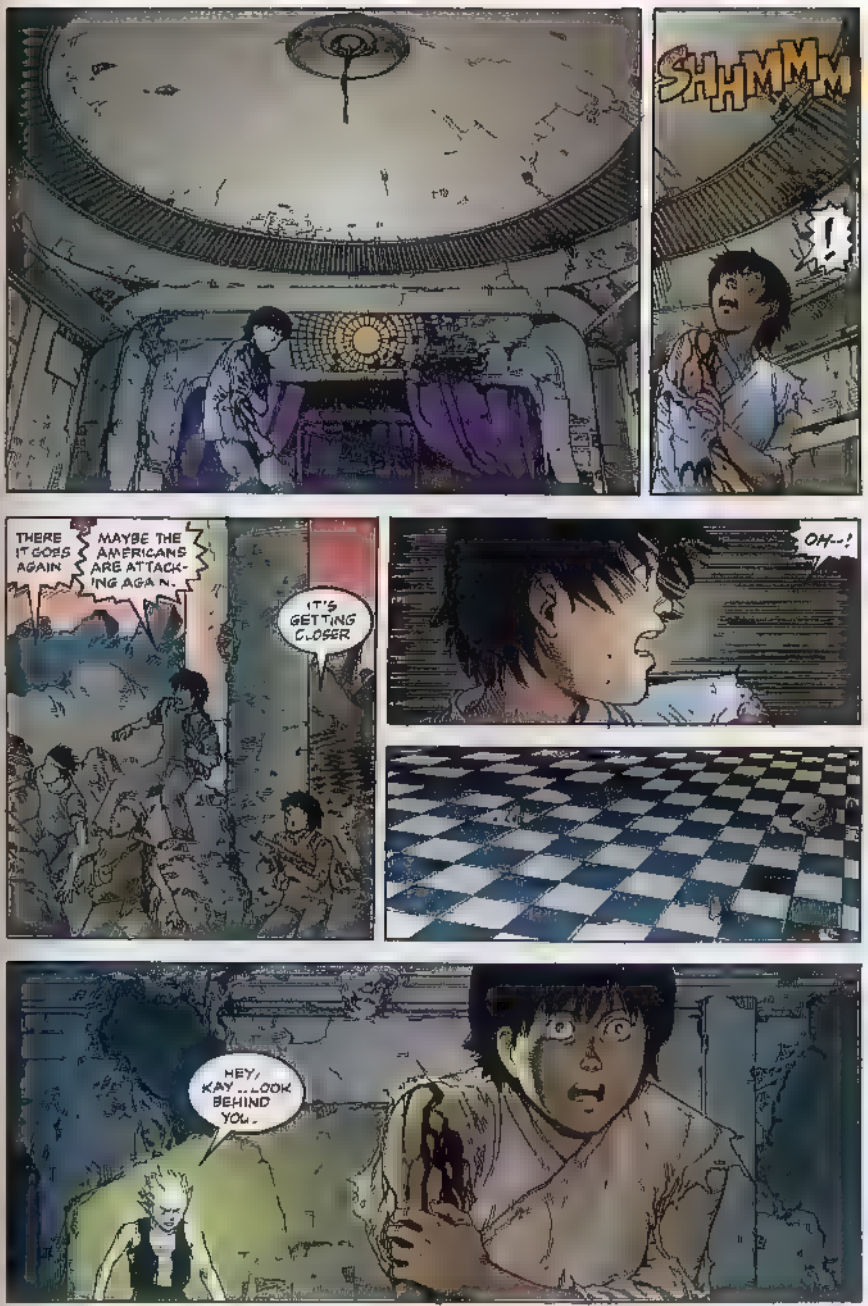
WHAT THE--?!
mush
HELL!
KAY!
NO!
DON'T FIGHT HIM NOW!
KANEDA, RUN!
HUH?!

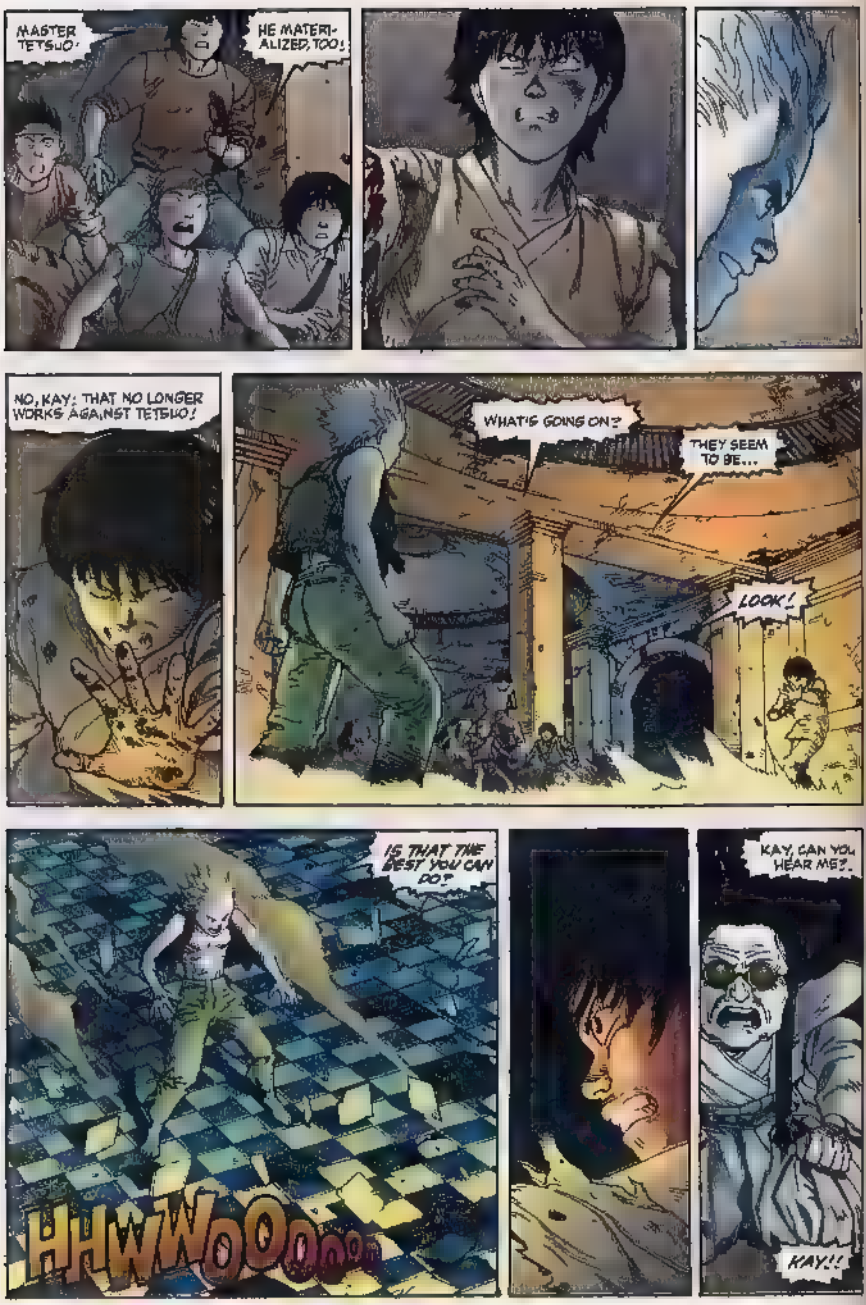
BOOOM
YIPE!
*GASP_!


TAK
SHIT!
VIII

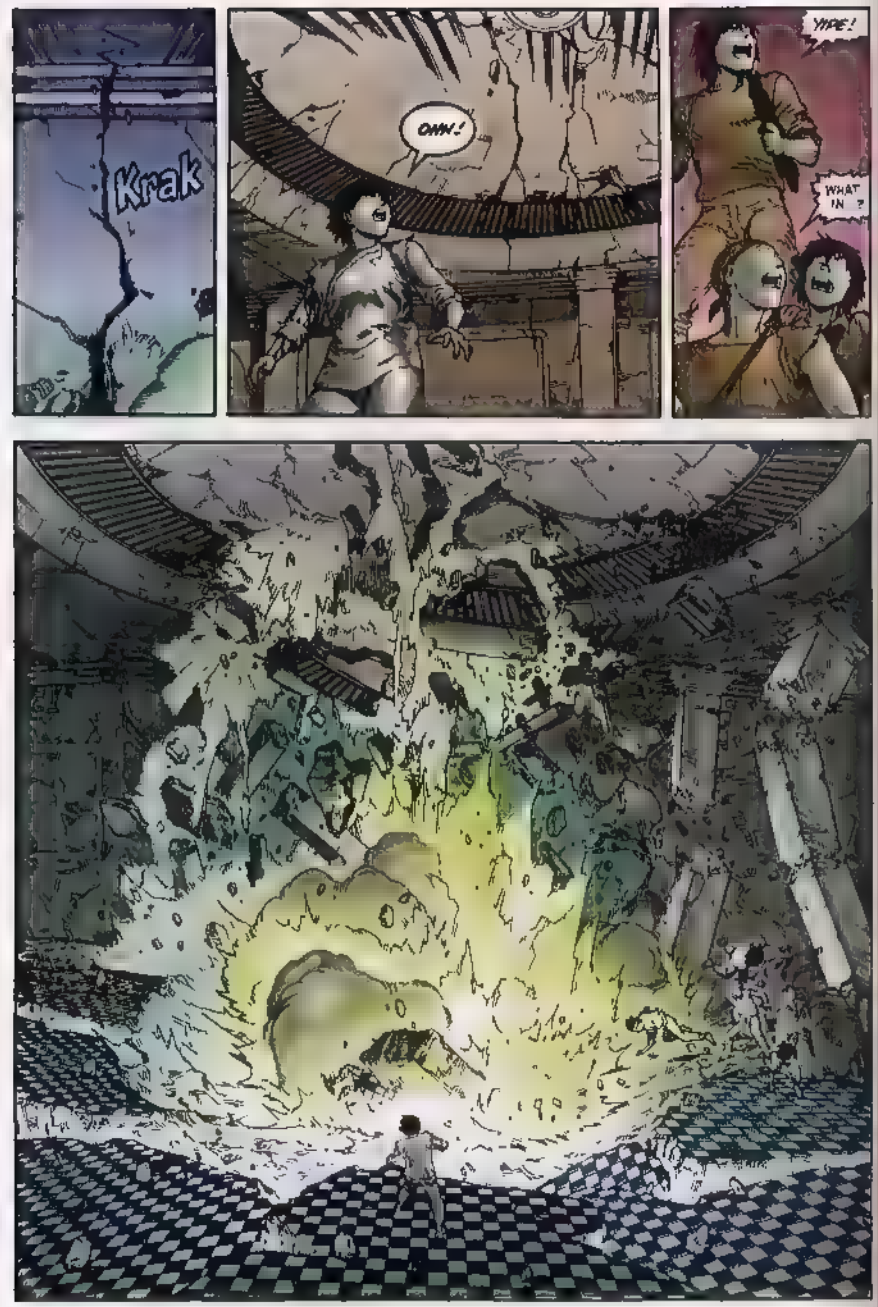
KABOOM
SSHHHHM
RRUMBLE
EH..?

THUD
TAK
HEY!!
WHERE'D THE BABE COME FROM?
WHAT?!
HEY! THERE IS SOMEONE THERE!
I'M TELLIN YOU, SHE JUST APPEARED.
SHE AIN'T FROM THE EMPIRE!
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF


SHHMMM
!
THERE IT GOES AGAIN
MAYBE THE AMERICANS ARE ATTACKING AGAIN.
IT'S GETTING CLOSER
OH--!
HEY, KAY...LOOK BEHIND YOU.


MASTER TETSUO!
HE MATERIALIZED, TOO!
NO, KAY: THAT NO LONGER WORKS AGAINST TETSUO!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
THEY SEEM TO BE...
LOOK!
IS THAT THE BEST YOU CAN DO?
HHWWOOOOO
KAY, CAN YOU HEAR ME?..
KAY!!

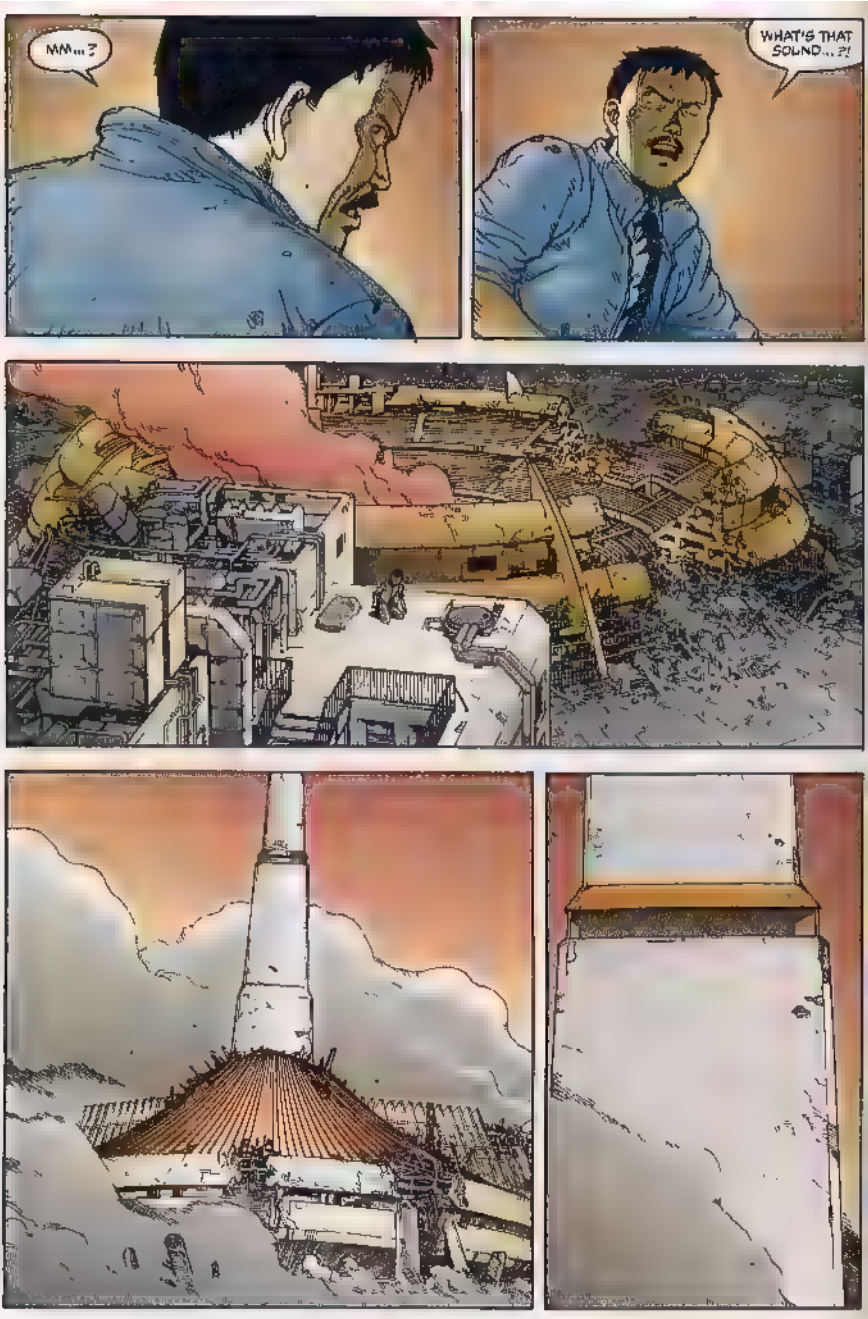
SSHHH
-GRRRR-
AAIEE!
BOOM
EEP!
MASTER TETSUO'S DOJJW!
RRUMBLE


Krak
OHH!
YIPE!
WHAT IN ?

GASP!
SOMETHING WRONG?

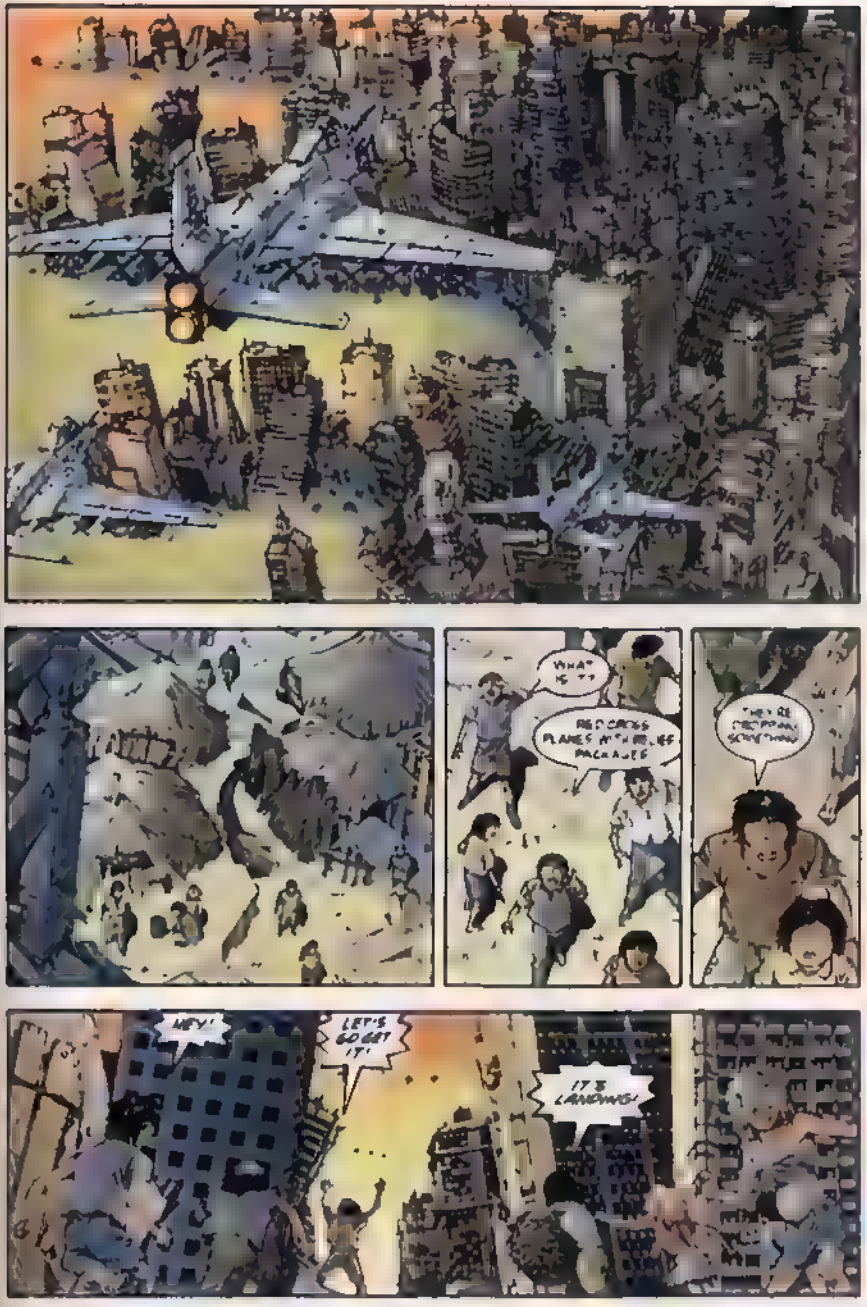
SSSHHHM
I GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT WHATEVER THAT NOISE WAS..
HEY! THE CONTROLS WON'T RESPOND!
CALLING.

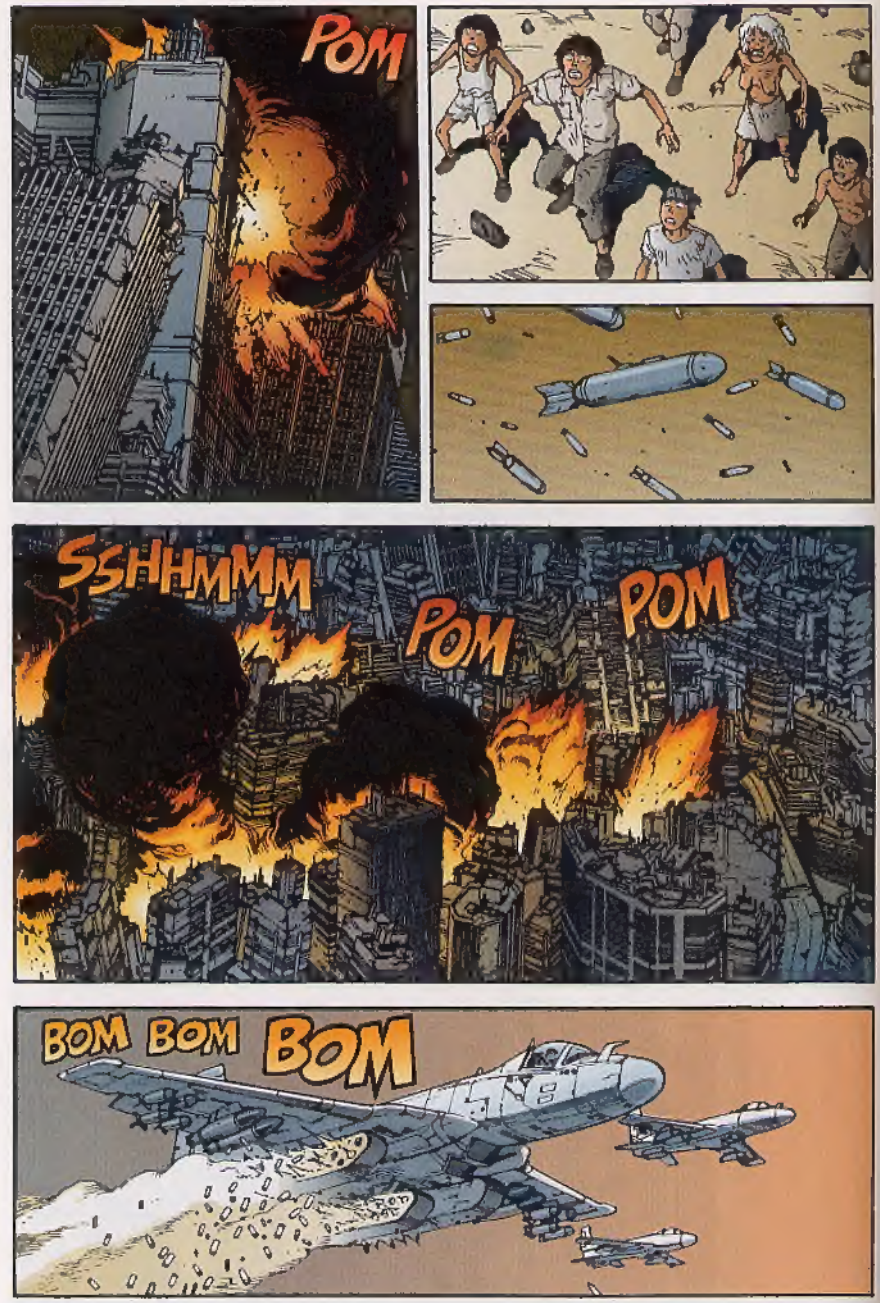
HOVER AT AN ALTITUDE OF OVER 200 METERS AND PREPARE TO RECEIVE DATA TRANSMISSION...
HMM...?
WHAT'S THAT?


MM...?
WHAT'S THAT SOUND...?!

TH--
--THAT LOOKS LIKE--!
VVVVn
VVVVVN

PLANES...
VVNNNN
FLY N' FROM THE EAST...


WHAT IS IT?
RED CROSS PLANES WITH RELIEF PACKAGES
THEY'RE DROPPING SOMETHING
HEY!
LET'S GO GET IT!
IT'S LANDING!



NEXT ISSUE: **STRIKE FROM SPACE**

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Inside the roiling vapor of a deadly germ warfare cloud, weapons fire ferocious charges of lightning-like destruction, a hi-tech storm warning of the man-made tempest that continues to assail what's left of Neo-Tokyo. It rumbles deep and dark as American troops in bio-chemical warfare suits march ominously through shattered canyons that were once city streets. It flares bright with explosions of raw energy and telekinetic fury, former friends now turned adversaries competing in a most dangerous game of hunter and hunted. And at the storm's center, an eerily composed Tetsuo, his icy calm making him even more sinister.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

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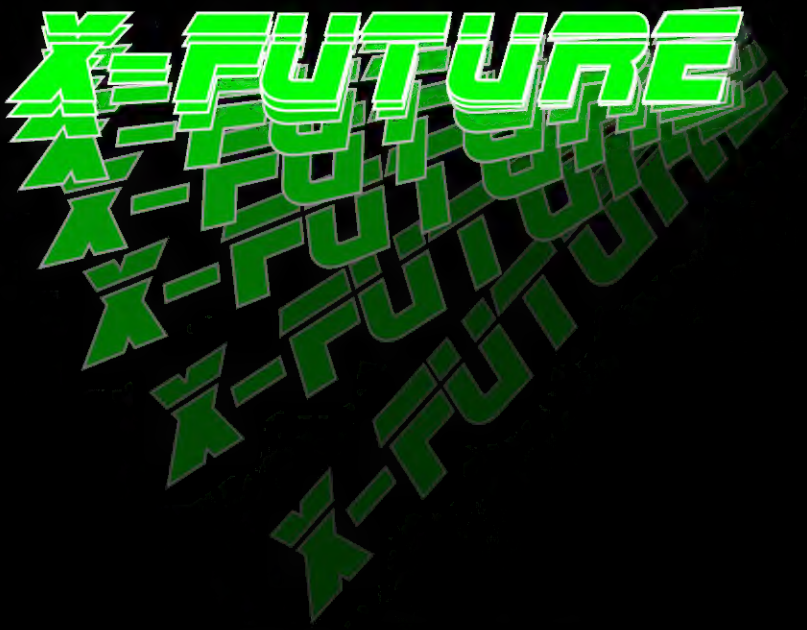

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